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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 28 JULY 14, 2008

INSIDE

Editorial: For cost-of-living raise for workers

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Imperialists tighten sanctions on Zimbabwe

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The U.S. government and its imperialist allies tightened sanctions against the Zimbabwean government in the aftermath of the June 27 runoff presidential elections in the southern African country. In March, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) candidate Morgan Tsvangirai won the most votes with nearly 50 percent, but not enough to prevent a second round with President Robert Mugabe.

Five days before the election Tsvangirai dropped out and took refuge in the Dutch embassy. The MDC said

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High court curbs death penalty, keeps it for 'terrorism'

BY BEN JOYCE

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 25 in a 5–4 vote that the death penalty is unconstitutional in cases involving the rape of a child that does not result in the death of the victim.

The decision overturned laws on the books in six states—Georgia, Louisiana, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas—that allow executions for such cases. Louisiana is the only state where two men faced execution on such convictions at the time of the

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Workers and families protest Houston raid

Immigration cops round up 170 workers

Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Cesar Espinosa of Central American Resource Center addresses more than 80 protesters June 26 outside a clothing plant where an immigration raid took place the day before.

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—"We must speak up against ICE and its raids that try to make criminals out of working women. This has got to stop!" declared Olivia Espinosa at a rally at the Mickey Leland Federal Building June 26.

Organized by unions, immigrant rights organizations, and churches, more than 80 people turned out for the rally to protest a raid the day before by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) against workers at the Action Rags USA factory in east Houston. Protesters marched around the Federal Building chanting, "We're here! We're staying! And we're not going away!" and "*¡Sí se puede!*"

Two days later another 30 protesters picketed the Houston Processing Center, the privately run immigration jail where workers seized in the raid are being held.

At 7:00 a.m. on June 25, in what officials boast is the largest workplace raid ever to take place in Houston, 200 armor-vested ICE agents surrounded the factory and herded more than 170 workers, about 70 percent of the workforce, into vans. An ICE helicopter hovered overhead in case workers might be hiding on the roof or grounds.

Four workers had to be transported to medical facilities for injuries suffered during the attack. ICE officials said of the 166 workers detained, 130 were female, including 10 who were pregnant.

ICE officials say they had been investigating the factory for more than a year for hiring workers suspected of being "illegal immigrants." They report 135 of those rounded up were from Mexico, 12 from Honduras, 10

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Socialist Workers announce ballot effort in New York

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—The Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket will seek ballot status in 10 states this year, announced Martín Koppel, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in New York's 15th District, at a rally here to launch the biggest ballot effort, which will be in New York state. The party has been on the ballot here since 1948.

"In July we plan to collect 30,000 signatures in New York—double the state requirement," stated Koppel. Petitioning teams will hit the streets starting July 17 and gather the necessary signatures by August 3. Full-time petitioning teams during the weekdays and big mobilizations of campaign supporters over the July 19–20 and July 26–27 weekends will highlight the effort, the socialist candidate said.

The party is already approved for ballot status in New Jersey, Delaware, and Colorado. Over the next couple of months the campaign will also file in Washington, Iowa, Minnesota, Vermont, Louisiana, Florida, and New York.

Socialists on Delaware ballot

BY JOHN STUDER

DOVER, Delaware—For the first time in more than 30 years, the Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket will appear on the ballot here. On June 30 supporters filed papers to place the slate of Róger Calero for president and Alyson Kennedy for vice president on the ballot. Paul Baldwin from the Delaware State Commissioner of Elections Office said the candidates would be posted on the office's Web site the next day.

Hundreds of Delaware voters regis-

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Militant

Alyson Kennedy is joined by campaign supporter John Studer (far left); Osborne Hart, candidate for U.S. Congress in Pennsylvania's 2nd District (second from left); and Roy Inglee, Delaware campaign chair (far right), as they file for ballot status in Dover June 30.

Construction workers strike in Australia over unsafe sites

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Thousands of construction workers in southeast Queensland, both union and nonunion, walked off the job June 23 to protest the deaths of two coworkers a couple of days earlier.

Chris Gear, 36, and Steve Sayer, 52, fell 26 stories to their death when the scaffolding they were working on collapsed at a high-rise building site in southeast Queensland. The Queensland secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), Michael Ravbar, said that workers struck because "there are too many people getting injured and too many people getting killed and they are just sick and tired of it."

Ravbar said safety standards had dropped at many sites since workplace safety protections were removed by the former Conservative government's antiunion "WorkChoices" legislation. He

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European Union lifts its sanctions against Cuba

BY RÓGER CALERO

The European Union (EU) decided June 19 to lift diplomatic sanctions against Cuba.

In 2003 the imperialist governments in Europe that make up the EU imposed sanctions that included ending all high-level visits to Cuba, cutting back on cultural exchanges with the island, and inviting opponents of the Cuban Revolution to receptions on their national holidays at their embassies in Havana.

The measures were imposed in an attempt to try to politically isolate the Cuban government, using as a pretext the trials of 75 opponents of the revolution that Washington and other imperialist powers falsely claimed were persecuted for their political beliefs. The 75 were convicted for participating in acts backed and financed by the U.S. government as part of its nearly five-decades-long effort to destroy the Cuban Revolution.

Continuing the campaign waged by imperialist governments from Washington to Madrid to Ottawa to brand Cuba as a repressive government, EU external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner said that Cuba must release all alleged political prisoners.

"There will be very clear language also on what the Cubans still have to do," she said.

Washington was not pleased with the lifting of sanctions. U.S. State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack, called the EU decision a "tactical difference."

Capitalists rulers in Europe have sought to get an edge over their U.S. competitors by trading and investing in Cuba, at the same time that they have joined in the efforts to undermine the socialist revolution.

In 1996 U.S. president William Clinton signed into law the so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act, which tightened the economic embargo against Cuba that Washington has maintained since 1960.

At the same time, in 1996 the EU adopted a "Common Position on Cuba" that imposed conditions on Cuba for "democratic reforms." Cuba's Foreign Ministry called the EU position an "interventionist text," that rather than rejecting the U.S. law, reached for "an understanding" with Washington.

The British *Guardian* newspaper reported June 23 that British banks have been honoring the U.S. embargo of Cuba even though the United Kingdom has no restrictions or laws that prevent UK companies from trading with Cuba.

According to the *Guardian*, London-based Barclays Bank last year told two Cuban enterprises to take their accounts elsewhere. And just last week Lloyds TSB told a London cigar importer and a natural food company, which imported Cuban sugar, that the bank would no longer carry out transactions involving Cuba.

"Lloyds TSB, Barclays Bank, the Royal Bank of Scotland, and HSBC are all complying with the U.S. blockade," the paper said, although all "are reluctant to talk about it."

Pathfinder sells well at Vancouver conference

Militant/Mary Ellen Marus

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Some 10,000 university and college professors and graduate students from across Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean attended the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences here, May 31–June 7. Forty-four Pathfinder titles were sold at the conference, including seven titles by Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983–87 revolution in the West African nation of Burkina Faso, and six copies of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters, Olympia Newton, and Norton Sandler.

—MARY ELLEN MARUS

Second gold firm files harassment suit in Canada

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL—On June 11 the gold mining company Banro brought a $5 million defamation suit against a collective of three authors and the publishing house Écosociété for their publication last April of *Noir Canada: pillage, corruption et criminalité en Afrique* (Black Canada: Plunder, Corruption and Crime in Africa).

This is the second such suit against the publisher and authors, with the mining giant Barrick Gold already suing them for $6 million.

Written by Alain Deneault, in collaboration with Delphine Abadie and William Sacher, *Noir Canada* is an exposé of the role of Canadian mining companies in Africa and the support they receive from the Canadian government.

Écosociété and the authors have launched a well-publicized defense campaign. On June 12 some 450 people attended a packed benefit concert.

As of June 21 more than 6,000 people and organizations had signed a petition demanding that the Quebec government adopt a law banning suits aimed at silencing critics and opponents of corporate interest.

A bill "to prevent abusive use of the courts and promote freedom of expression and citizen participation in public debate," was introduced June 12 in the Quebec National Assembly by Justice Minister Jacques Dupuis. It will be discussed and submitted for adoption next fall.

"This is partly the result of our and others' efforts," said *Noir Canada* author William Sacher that evening at a Militant Labor Forum here. Sacher stressed that the bill is not retroactive, however, and that the current suit by Barrick Gold will go ahead in the court.

Sharing the platform with Sacher, Michel Prairie from the Communist League stressed the importance for working people to support the fight put up by Écosociété and the authors of *Noir Canada*. He pointed out that "these attempts at censoring and silencing critics and opponents of big business and their government will be used against working people fighting for our rights."

THE MILITANT

Oppose U.S. war in Afghanistan

Washington is stepping up its military operations in Afghanistan and across the border into Pakistan, with full bipartisan backing from Congress. Read in the 'Militant' about why working people should oppose this war.

U.S. troops near the Pakistan border in Bermel, Afghanistan, 2006.

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Socialist candidate speaks at N.Y. meeting

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—"Working people in the United States and around the world are bearing the brunt of a world economic crisis that is just beginning and no one knows how long or how deep it is going to be," said Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States, addressing 50 people at a June 27 campaign appearance here.

Calero said, "The proposals put forward by the SWP campaign to confront growing unemployment, alleviate the impact of massive inflation, and protect the environment and working people from the rising toll on life and limb caused by the employers' profit drive are the only realistic response to the consequences imposed on working people by the capitalist rulers."

To combat inflation, the socialist candidate explained, "vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy and I, when elected, will appoint trusted union fighters to the Department of Labor to implement federal legislation for a sliding scale of wages and hours so that as the cost of living increases, wages will also increase. Steps will also be taken to end government rigging of statistics on inflation and unemployment that rob workers of billions of dollars in wages and benefits and lower their standard of living."

To counter unemployment, the socialist administration will prioritize passing legislation to force the bosses to shorten the workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work to all and to defend and extend affirmative action programs in employment, education, and housing, Calero explained. He said he would fight for a public works program to create jobs at union scale to build low-cost housing, schools, and hospitals, and to repair the infrastructure.

Calero noted that prospective Democratic Party presidential candidate Barack Obama says he's for a tax on the profits of oil companies, a $1,000 tax credit for the middle class, and a second economic stimulus rebate check. "We have a better proposal," Calero stated. "Repeal all sales taxes, including fuel taxes, which always hit working people the hardest."

Neither Obama nor Republican John McCain will take measures like these that eat into the profits of the wealthy, Calero said. He called for the unions to break with the twin capitalist parties and form a labor party based on combative unions that will contest the Democrats and Republicans in the electoral arena and lead the fight to defend working people.

Militant/Ved Dookhun

Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, speaks at June 27 campaign event at the Militant Labor Forum hall in New York City.

Meeting in New Zealand to celebrate life and political contributions of Mervyl Morrison

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Mervyl Morrison, a veteran working-class political activist and cadre of the communist movement, died here recently at age 71.

In spite of declining health in recent years Morrison was always prepared to respond to a call for working-class solidarity, whether at a picket line or a protest march, and to do what she could to help distribute the *Militant* newspaper and Pathfinder books.

That was the course that had guided Morrison's life since the mid-1970s, when—under the impact of rising struggles to oppose imperialist war and for an end to discrimination against women and against Maori—she joined the Socialist Action League, the predecessor of the Communist League.

Until her retirement Morrison was a worker and active unionist. She won respect from coworkers for her patient efforts to build support for labor struggles and social protests. Many also appreciated her keenness to introduce them to socialist literature.

The Communist League and Young Socialists are hosting a meeting July 5 to celebrate Mervyl Morrison's political life and contributions. Speakers will include Joel Britton from the Socialist Workers Party in the United States; Nick Fowler from the Young Socialists; Mike Tucker from the Communist League; Manuele Lasalo from the Communist League in Australia; and Brigid Mulrennan and Diane Rainey from the Pathfinder Print Project.

The celebration will be held at the Militant Labour Forum hall in Otahuhu, Auckland. Morrison was a regular participant at the forums held there on Friday evenings.

'Militant' July publishing schedule

The *Militant* will publish just three issues in the month of July due to our summer schedule. Issue number 29 will print on Monday, July 7, and be mailed out on Tuesday, July 8. We will not publish the next week. Publication will resume with issue number 30, which will be mailed out on Thursday, July 24.

Workers and families protest Houston raid

Continued from front page

from Guatemala, and 8 from El Salvador.

The Chamber of Commerce estimates 420,000 undocumented immigrants are in the 10-county Houston metropolitan region. These workers make up a 10th of the local work force.

Relatives and friends rushed to the plant during the raid. A few workers whose relatives brought their papers to the plant were released.

"My mother-in-law is in there," María López told reporters outside the plant. Francisco Luquín's wife was also detained. "She got a permit to stay here," he said. "We've got seven kids over here."

ICE officials say that 73 of the workers they seized are being released because they are either sole caregivers of minor children, underage, pregnant, or have some medical condition. All, however, are under supervision and will have to attend an immigration hearing where a judge will decide if they'll be deported.

Juana María Olvera, 35, was one of those detained at Action Rags USA and released because she is pregnant. "There are a lot of undocumented women working here, and a lot are single women who are working to support their families," Olvera told reporters.

"My desire is the same as all the rest of us. We're hoping for an amnesty so we can get legal permission to work," said Olvera.

Under threat of deportation, some workers are being pressed to sign "voluntary departures" rather than risk losing a fight against deportation.

Teodoro Aguiluz, director of the Central American Resource Center (CRECEN), spoke at the rally outside the Federal Building, "This government continues to attack our people who are devoted only to honest work. We need to stop the raids and change these criminal laws."

Ceil Roeger, a nun of the Dominican order, spoke at the rally at the immigration jail. She said that she attended both protest actions because they oppose injustice. If there is another action, she will be there too, she added. Protesters launched an Emergency Response Network which will meet July 15 at the Houston building of the Catholic Charities.

Socialists on Delaware ballot

Continued from front page

tered SWP over the last four years to meet state requirements. Baldwin told the press that the party had certified more than the required number of registered voters to be placed on the ballot.

Alyson Kennedy was joined by Roy Inglee, the party campaign's chairman in Delaware, and Osborne Hart, the SWP candidate in Philadelphia's 2nd Congressional District, to file the papers and meet the press.

Kennedy was interviewed by the *Delaware News Journal*, the state's major daily, and WHYY-TV Channel 12, the public television station covering Wilmington, Philadelphia, and the Delaware Valley region. The TV station gave extensive coverage to the party's success in winning ballot status, which will be posted on its Web site for a week.

Construction workers strike

Continued from front page

said workers were angry that the safety regulations had not been reinstated by the new Labor government.

The condition and attachment of the swing-stage scaffold that collapsed are being investigated by police and Queensland Workplace Health and Safety. Swing-stage scaffolds are a type of suspended scaffolding anchored to a building's roof and lowered with ropes or cables. Inspectors will also investigate the suspended scaffolds used at other building sites in Queensland.

Gear and Sayer were wearing harnesses attached to the scaffold, but the harnesses were not anchored to the building. The CFMEU wants regulations changed to make it mandatory for workers across Australia to be connected to the top of a building while using swing-stage scaffolding.

U.S. lifts some sanctions against North Korea

Insists nuclear facilities be dismantled

BY BEN JOYCE

President Bush announced June 26 that Washington has begun a 45-day process to remove the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) from its list of "state sponsors of terrorism," and would immediately lift some sanctions imposed by the U.S. government.

The announcement of Washington's measures comes after Pyongyang disclosed information about its development of nuclear energy. The disclosure is a product of talks between Pyongyang, Beijing, Tokyo, Moscow, Seoul, and Washington that took place in 2007. The day after Bush's announcement, North Korea disabled its reactor at Yongbyon.

The multilateral talks had aimed at putting pressure on the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear program, including nuclear energy used for electrification.

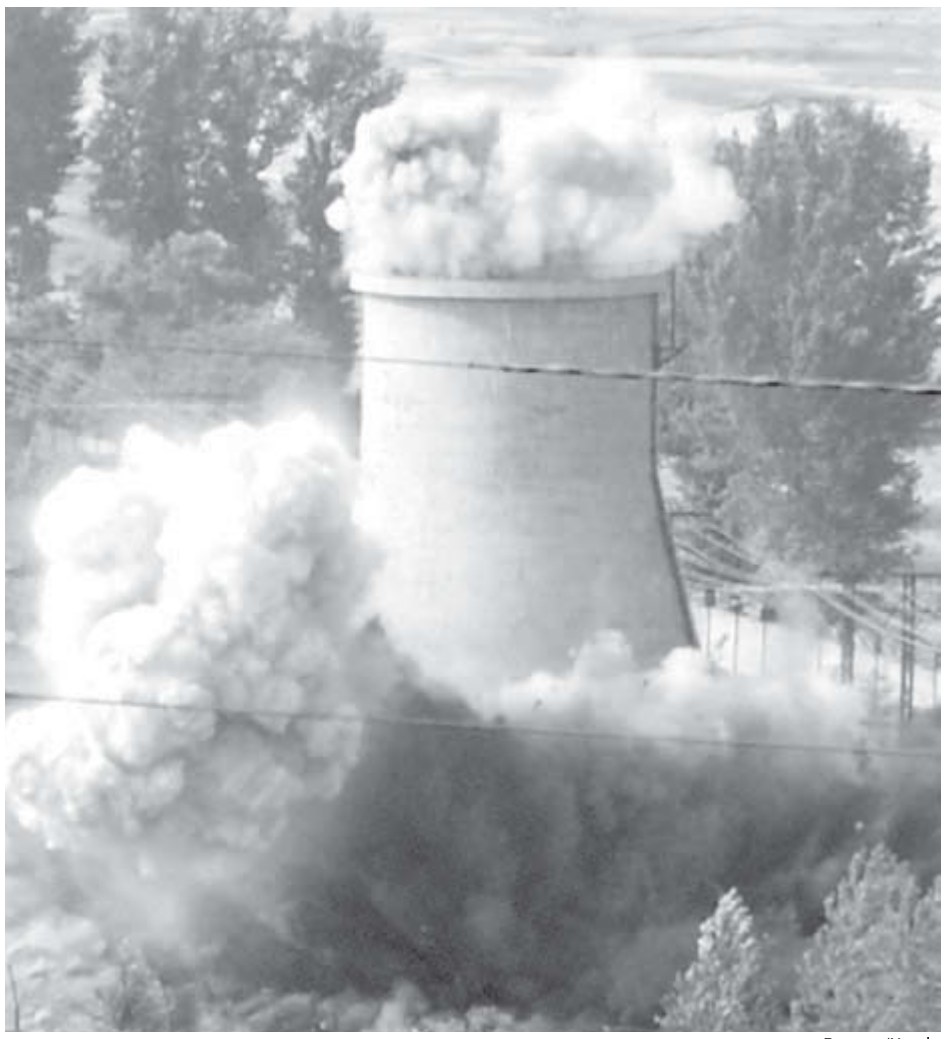
Leading up to the talks in 2007 Washington had stepped up the pressure on the North Korean government. In September 2005, the U.S. Treasury Department accused Banco Delta Asia, a bank based in Macau, China, of counterfeiting for the DPRK and blocked U.S. banks from doing business with it. In response, other foreign banks, especially in Asia, cut off their business with North Korea for fear of similar reprisals.

Removing a country from the list of state sponsors of terrorism requires a 45-day congressional notification period before it becomes official. The Bush administration also is exempting the DPRK from the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917. Both measures loosen economic restrictions on trade and assistance to the North Korean regime, one of the most heavily sanctioned countries in the world.

At the press conference announcing the moves, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said, "The reality is that there are so many other sanctions on North Korea because of its other behaviors that there's really no practical effect of taking them off the terrorist list."

Today, the U.S. military maintains 28,000 troops on the Korean peninsula.

The Japanese government has been a leading voice against the recent measures by Washington. Tokyo criticized the moves as premature, alleging concern over Japanese Tokyo claims were abducted by the North Korean government more than two decades ago. Japan's *Daily Yomiuri* reports that the recent U.S. decision "has given the impression that Washington has been excessive in its concessions to Pyongyang, despite the fact the deal was based on a mutual agreement."



Reuters/Kyodo

Demolition of the main cooling tower at the plutonium-producing nuclear reactor in Yongbyon, North Korea, June 27.

Washington has made it clear that pressures will continue until its demands are met. The United States will pursue the dismantling of all North Korean nuclear facilities and ending "these activities in a way that we can fully verify," Bush said at the June 26 press conference. "If North Korea makes the wrong choices, the United States and its partners in the six-party talks will act accordingly."

Democratic presidential contender Barack Obama said, "Sanctions are a critical part of our leverage to pressure North Korea to act. They should only be lifted based on North Korean performance." Republican John McCain stated that the U.S. government "must keep diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea to meet all of its obligations under the six-party agreement, including denuclearization."

Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Róger Calero called for ending all sanctions and threats against North Korea and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the peninsula.

Heatstroke deaths rising among farm workers

BY BEN JOYCE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that death from heatstroke is rising among farm workers in the United States.

Between 1992 and 2006, 423 U.S. workers died of heatstroke, 68 of them farm workers. The report says that heatstroke is likely underreported given that it may not be recognized at the time of death or is not recognized by state agencies as meeting the definition for an injury-related death. The majority of heatstroke deaths occurred among foreign-born workers, approximately 71 percent of them among workers from Latin America.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports that occupational mortality rates for agricultural workers are approximately four times the rate for all other industries.

The report points out that in very hot weather farm workers often have to wear extra clothing to protect themselves from hazards such as pesticide poisoning or other hazards associated with handling crops.

For further reading

New International no. 12

"Today's sharpening interimperialist conflicts are fueled both by the opening stages of a world depression and by the most far-reaching shift in Washington's military policy and organization since the late 1930s, when the U.S. rulers prepared to join the expanding Asian and European wars, transforming them into World War II."

IN THIS ISSUE:

Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun
by Jack Barnes

Their Transformation and Ours
SWP Draft Resolution

Crisis, Boom, and Revolution
reports by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky

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Peasants in Brazil protest cost of food, fuel

BY VED DOOKHUN

Thousands of landless peasants and agricultural workers in Brazil protested in June against the rising cost of food and fuel.

The protesters targeted plantations, dams, railways, and corporate offices of agribusiness companies considered responsible for rising prices. Hundreds of rural workers occupied a eucalyptus plantation owned by Votorantim, one of Brazil's largest paper and pulp manufacturers, protesting the impact of one-crop farms on the environment and on small farmers.

Another 1,500 occupied railway tracks for 10 hours to prevent the iron ore mining company Vale from transporting its ore. They were demanding the company negotiate with 500 families who will be displaced by construction of a hydroelectric dam that Vale is involved in building.

In southern Brazil police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters who attempted to disrupt a supermarket owned by Wal-Mart. The actions were organized by La Vía Campesina (The Peasant's Way), an international network of peasant organizations.

According to government statistics, while the average price of food in Brazil rose 2 percent in May, the price of rice rose 20 percent. Bread rose by 4.7 percent and meat by 3.5 percent.

Brazil, with a population of 192 million, is the most populated country in Latin America, as well as the leading agricultural producer. It is the largest exporter of beef, coffee, sugar, and orange juice in the world. Yet more than 40 million people in Brazil live on less than $1 a day. At the same time Brazil has one of the fastest growing rates of millionaires in the world, along with China, India, and Russia. In 2007 the number of millionaires in Brazil grew to 190,000 from 130,000 in 2006.

In June, Brazil was awarded "investment grade" status by the financial rating agency Standard & Poor's. Its international reserves nearly tripled from $64 billion in 2003 to $188.2 billion in February 2008, some 4 billion more than its combined foreign debt. It also registered a trade surplus of $40 billion last year.

In February, President Luis Ignácio Lula da Silva announced that Brazil had paid off its foreign debt to the International Monetary Fund. Da Silva said the government had "taken an extremely important step toward transforming itself into a country taken seriously in the financial world."

To make sure it is "taken seriously" by imperialism, Brazil has committed more than 1,200 troops as part of a UN occupation force in Haiti following the U.S.-engineered ousting of democratically elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004. Brazil has the largest contingent of the 9,000 troops stationed in Haiti since 2004. In May, da Silva announced that another 100 troops would be sent to the island.

One of the biggest effects of the rush to invest in Brazil has been the increased destruction of the Amazon rain forest. This will be the subject of an upcoming article.

THE MILITANT
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ON THE PICKET LINE

N.Y. construction workers march to defend unions

NEW YORK—Some 400 construction workers, many with their hardhats on, marched from Yankee Stadium June 18 to protest the growing use of nonunion labor in the construction industry in this city.

Contingents carried banners identifying marchers as members of unions representing carpenters, plasterers, laborers, operating engineers, mason tenders, iron workers, and others.

James Tanner, a shop steward for the carpenters union, said, "Union workers are only 40 percent on construction sites today and it is shrinking. We are from different unions today, but we watch each other's backs. We have young, skilled union workers finishing apprenticeship programs who cannot find union jobs. Unions are needed."

—Dan Fein

Denver janitors fight for higher wages, benefits

DENVER—Flashing purple shirts and picket signs some 200 people came to march on the Civic Center here June 17 to support the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 105, which is fighting to increase wages and benefits for more than 2,000 janitors at about 25 cleaning companies. The janitors' current contract expires June 28.

SEIU representative Jason Bane outlined the union's primary demands as workload reduction, better wages, improved benefits, and a fair distribution of health care. Currently only full time janitors in the downtown area receive family health-care benefits, the *Denver Post* reported.

The Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute lists the self-sufficiency wage for an adult in Denver County as $7.52 per hour. The present starting wage for janitors is $8.10.

—John Banister

Food court workers picket at the Auckland airport on June 28

Food court workers strike at New Zealand airport

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Thirty workers employed in the food court at Auckland International Airport and their supporters held a lively picket outside the main terminal building June 28 to protest what their union, Unite, calls "New Zealand's worst employment contract." The two-hour walkout followed a similar action June 7.

Picketers handed out a union leaflet that explained that the contract says food court workers have a start time but no finish time, meaning they could work for one hour or 10 hours a day, depending on the supervisor's say-so. This year the company reduced the average shift length to seven-and-a half hours so it wouldn't have to give two 15-minute paid breaks. The workers receive minimum wage or slightly above. Minimum wage in New Zealand is NZ$12 an hour (US$9).

Union delegate Joseph Tikitau told the *Militant* that in the face of company intimidation workers at the site began three years ago trying to organize a union. "When we started there were only a few of us, but it's growing," he said. There are now 60 workers in the union, more than half of the food court's workforce.

—Terry Coggan

Army to move up deployment of new weapons technology in battle

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Army announced June 26 that the delivery of new high-tech weapons components of its Future Combat Systems (FCS) will be accelerated for troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is the latest piece in the Pentagon's effort to transform the military to fight the kinds of wars it needs to fight in the "global war on terror."

The changes in the FCS shift its overall focus from heavy armored units to more mobile infantry combat brigades. Army studies show it was infantry units that were highest in demand in Afghanistan and Iraq, officials said at a Pentagon news conference June 26.

The FCS has 14 components, including remotely controlled aerial and ground vehicles as well as sensors capable of detecting intruders. Missile strikes from aerial drones have become increasingly used by the U.S. military against al-Qaeda-backed militias in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan.

New communications technology will be integrated into new manned vehicles, artillery, and missile launchers that can hit targets not in the line of sight.

The army will work to get large numbers of robots and miniature aerial drones—both of which are designed for use in crowded urban areas—to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan by late 2010, instead of 2015 as initially planned, reported the *Wall Street Journal*.

Lt. Gen. Stephen Speakes, the army's deputy chief of staff for programs, said the shift in the FCS deployment plans "is based on seven years of sustained combat" and has "relevance to the current war fight."

The changes in the FCS are latest piece in the process of transforming the U.S. military—one that was accelerated by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Since the 1990s the U.S. military has been driving through an historic reorganization in its global deployment, military strategy, and order of battle away from the large tank-reliant armored divisions used in the first invasion of Iraq to lightly armored and more mobile combat brigades.

Prosecution of undocumented immigrants is rising

BY SETH GALINSKY

Washington has sharply increased criminal prosecutions of undocumented workers, especially along one-fourth of the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border.

Now virtually every worker who is caught "illegally" crossing along three stretches of the border—120 miles near Yuma, Arizona; 210 miles near Del Rio, Texas; and 171 miles near Laredo, Texas—faces at least minor criminal charges and an average of one month in jail followed by deportation.

Before "Operation Streamline," as the program begun in 2005 is known, most Mexicans detained by immigration cops were deported without criminal charges.

Last March the number of undocumented workers facing charges was 3,746. This March an all-time high of 9,350 workers without papers were brought up on charges, more than half of 16,298 federal criminal cases nationwide. The next closest category that month was drug offenses: 2,674.

Government officials claim Operation Streamline and other federal anti-immigrant measures are responsible for a 20 percent drop in arrests in 2007 and an expected drop of 15 percent this year, by discouraging workers from trying to enter the United States. But the *Washington Post* points out in a June 2 article that the crackdown comes amid a "softening U.S. economy, which tends to decrease illegal immigration."

Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) adopted anti-immigrant legislation of its own. The European Parliament approved new rules June 18 giving the green light to detaining workers without papers for up to 18 months prior to expulsion.

The "return regulations," set to take affect by 2010, also include fingerprinting and screening all visitors to the 27-nation bloc.

The legislation passed with 367 votes in favor, 206 against, and 109 abstentions. It was steered through the parliament by German Christian Democrat Manfred Weber and backed by Spain's social-democratic prime minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.

There are as many as 8 million undocumented immigrants living in EU member countries, the majority from North Africa, the former Soviet Union, and the Balkans. But there are also large numbers from Latin America, especially in Spain, where there are more than 2 million. Most are from Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, and Venezuela.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

July 15, 1983

DAWSON, Pa.—The Fifth National Conference of Women Miners, held here June 24–26, marked an important step forward for women miners, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), and for all women fighting for their rights.

The conference occurred in the context of stepped up attacks by the coal operators and the government against the UMWA.

The more than 140 coal miners who were there—113 of whom were women—were among those union activists who are in the forefront of trying to figure out how to get the UMWA into fighting trim to repel efforts to weaken the union.

July 14, 1958

A mass meeting sponsored by the Philadelphia branch of the NAACP, June 26, protested the racist assault at a Memorial Day outing in Forrest Park, Pa. and demanded prosecution of police who greeted returning picnickers—the victims of assault—with swinging nightsticks.

Mr. James Baker, counsel for the NAACP, said his organization would appeal to the state and federal Attorney Generals and institute civil suit against the Park owners for failing to provide protection to patrons.

Several in the audience proposed that a return to the Park be organized with adequate preparations made to defend the Negroes from racist attack.

July 15, 1933

NEW YORK, N.Y.—Suspension of all jobless relief by the city administration stared in the faces of 2,000,000 unemployed workers and their dependents this week. Only vague promises of aid from the state government have been made. The situation of the unemployed remains highly precarious and a desperate tension exists in their ranks.

The suspension of relief came about as a result of a financial crisis due to the sabotage of Relief Bond sales by the local bankers. The bankers are intent on cutting down the city budget so as to enable the administration to pay them on loans due, or at least to force concessions profitable for them.

Cuban Five frame-up: part of wider assault on workers rights

(Second in a series)

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The frame-up and imprisonment of five Cuban revolutionaries by the U.S. government for the past 10 years is not an isolated incident. It is part of the broader assault by the wealthy U.S. rulers on the rights and living standards of working people, which has escalated over the past decade and a half, under both the Clinton and Bush administrations.

An article last week, the first in a series highlighting key aspects of this case, described how the Cuban Five, as they have become known, were arrested by federal cops on Sept. 12, 1998.

In June 2001 Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, and René González were convicted in a federal court on 26 counts. These false charges included "conspiracy to commit espionage," acting as unregistered agents of a foreign government, and, in the case of Hernández, "conspiracy to commit murder."

In reality, the five men had been keeping the Cuban government informed of the activities of Florida-based counterrevolutionary groups that have a record of planting bombs and carrying out other deadly attacks on Cuba from U.S. territory—assaults that are part of Washington's nearly 50 years of hostile actions against the Cuban Revolution.

From the arrests to the trial and imprisonment of the five men—two U.S.-born citizens and three Cuban-born immigrants—every aspect of this case has been a travesty of justice, one that threatens the constitutional rights of all.

FBI wiretapping and break-ins

The U.S. government used the case to justify violations of the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, which bars unreasonable search and seizure. FBI cops acknowledged that over three years starting in 1995, they spied on and repeatedly broke into the south Florida homes of all five men. Under the cover of a federal warrant, they conducted electronic surveillance on their apartments, secretly recorded their phone conversations, copied computer diskettes, and seized family photos, personal correspondence, and other belongings, government officials told the press.

"FBI agents ransacked the $850-a-month, one-bedroom apartment" of Gerardo Hernández, Reuters news agency reported Sept. 16, 1998. "They took everything," his building manager said.

"They have three years of wiretaps, room bugs, even surreptitious entries—burglaries—and they don't have any specifics," said Jack Blumenfeld, an attorney for Antonio Guerrero, according to the Oct. 6, 1998, *Miami Herald*. He spoke at the time a federal grand jury brought indictments against the five.

Blumenfeld noted that the FBI conducted these break-ins and snooping operations despite the fact that the indictments did not allege a single act of espionage against the U.S. government. None of the 1,400 pages presented as "evidence" at the trial showed that the defendants had handled any classified documents.

How the did the U.S. Justice Department get around this problem? By bringing charges of "conspiracy."

"Conspiracy has always been the charge used by the prosecution in political cases," defense attorney Leonard Weinglass explained in an interview quoted by the National Lawyers Guild in June 2008. Such a charge frees the government from having to prove an illegal action, only a vague "agreement" to commit such an action at some unspecified time in the future.

The trial jury "was asked to find that there was an agreement to commit espionage. The government never had to prove that espionage actually happened. It could not have proven that espionage occurred," Weinglass noted.

Numerous violations of rights were committed during the trial against the five, from the use of secret evidence to the judge's refusal of defense motions to move the proceedings out of Miami because of the atmosphere of intimidation and bias there. A subsequent article will take up in more detail what happened at the trial.

Denied bail, months in 'hole'

For 33 months, from their arrests through the end of the trial, the five were held without bail at the Federal Detention Center in Miami. In addition, for 17 months before the trial they were kept in solitary confinement—the notorious "hole," isolating them from contact with their families and limiting contact with their lawyers.

After they were convicted on frame-up charges, while the judge went on vacation before proceeding to the sentencing, the five were returned to the hole for another 48 days. They were moved out of the isolation cells only after repeated efforts by their attorneys.

And in March 2003 the men, now locked up in five prisons across the country, were placed in solitary once again—this time, under even more restrictive conditions known as the "box"—a hole within the "hole." They were denied communication with their attorneys by telephone or letter, and all their writing materials were confiscated. The Justice Department said only that this action was for unspecified "national security" reasons.

Weinglass, who gained admission to visit Hernández once during that time, wrote, "He is confined in a very small cell barely three paces wide, with no windows and only a slot in the metal door through which food is passed. His clothes were taken from him and he is allowed to wear only underpants and a T-shirt, but no shoes. He cannot tell if it is day or night. His is the only cell where the lights are on 24 hours a day."

It was only after an international campaign of public protests that U.S. authorities returned them to the general prison population.

Over the past decade the five have been put in the hole for shorter periods as well. On several occasions they have also been subjected to prison lockdowns by the authorities.

On top of the long sentences and harsh treatment—unsuccessful attempts to break the five revolutionaries—they have been denied the normal right to receive visits from their loved ones. Their wives, mothers, and children, who live in Cuba, have been able to visit only once a year on average because of the long delays in obtaining visas. And U.S. authorities have outright denied all visa requests by Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva to visit their husbands, Gerardo Hernández and René González, respectively.

Stepped-up attacks on workers rights

The frame-up of the Cuban Five—beginning with the 1995–98 FBI operation that led to their arrest—was carried out by the Clinton administration and its Justice Department, headed by Attorney General Janet Reno, at a time when the U.S. capitalist rulers were stepping up their assaults on workers rights as well as on the wages and social gains of working people. U.S. district judge Joan Lenard, who presided over the November 2000–June 2001 trial, is herself a Clinton appointee.

In 1994 the government enacted the Crime Bill, which undermined Fourth Amendment protections against arbitrary search and seizure in private homes, allowing prosecutors to use illegally obtained evidence in court. It allocated funds to put 100,000 more cops on the streets.

The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act expanded the immigration cops' powers to seize and deport undocumented workers without the right to judicial review or appeal. The *migra* was expanded to become the largest federal police agency.

The 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act allowed immigration police to jail immigrants using secret evidence. It broadened government powers to use wiretaps and hold an accused person without bail in preventive detention.

The government further restricted prisoners' appeal and parole rights. Mandatory minimum sentences and longer terms became more common, including life without parole.

The government expanded to about 60 the number of federal offenses punishable by death, and executions accelerated after the adoption of the 1994 Federal Death Penalty Act. The Comprehensive Terrorism Protection Act of 1995 denied the right of death row prisoners to submit more than one habeas corpus petition for federal court review of their cases.

Under the Clinton presidency, between 1993 and 2001, the number of people behind bars jumped by 42 percent. Lockdowns and solitary confinement increasingly became the norm. Today 2.3 million people in the United States are behind bars.

In 1999 the U.S. government framed up Taiwanese-born scientist Wen Ho Lee, who was accused of stealing nuclear secrets for China. While the government could not prove a case of espionage, it denied him bail and kept him in solitary confinement for nine months, using the case to strengthen its arbitrary powers in the name of "national security."

In April 2000, heavily armed commandos of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) carried out a raid to take six-year-old Elián González from a home in Miami. The White House exploited its half-year-long refusal to return the child to his father in Cuba in order to burnish the image of the INS, reinforce the agency's powers that are exempt from judicial review, and deal a blow to

Continued on page 7

The frame-up of the Cuban Five was carried out as the U.S. rulers stepped up their attacks on political rights. Above, heavily armed immigration cops raid a Miami home in April 2000 to take six-year old Elián González. The Clinton administration used that case to reinforce powers of the immigration police that are exempt from judicial review and—as with the Cuban Five—deal a blow to the constitutional right to be safe from arbitrary search and seizure.

For further reading:

United States vs. the Cuban Five

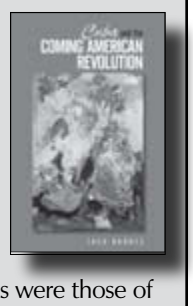
A Judicial Cover-up

by Rodolfo Dávalos Fernández

"From start to finish, the proceedings were tainted, corrupt, null and void, vindictive. Every right of the accused to 'due process' was flouted." Tells the story of the Cuban Five and the fight for their release. **$22**

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes



A book about prospects for revolution in the United States, where the political capacities of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of Cuba's working people—of which the Cuban Five are outstanding examples, now serving on the front ranks of the class struggle in the U.S. **$10**

Order from www.pathfinderpress.com or from locations listed on page 8 .

Zimbabwe sanctions

Continued from front page
that more that 80 of its activists had been killed by supporters of Mugabe, candidate of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party.

On June 26 former South African president Nelson Mandela called the situation in Zimbabwe a "tragic failure of leadership." Mandela's statement was the latest among a growing number by officials of African governments critical of the election—some even calling for a "peacekeeping" military intervention.

Sanctions

U.S. president George Bush June 28 ordered additional sanctions on top of existing travel bans and bank account freezes on central members of Zimbabwe's government. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the U.S. government would introduce a resolution at the UN Security Council to impose tougher sanctions. The U.S. government currently holds the rotating chair of the Security Council.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the British government is lobbying countries in Southern Africa to "create an economic blockade" against Zimbabwe, reported the London *Times*. Among other measures the British government is considering are: widening British and U.S. travel bans against Zimbabwe government officials, preventing their children from studying in Britain or the United States, completely banning the purchase of goods, imposing sanctions against companies operating in Zimbabwe, and pressuring Beijing to break relations with Harare.

The Australian government announced June 22 that it is seeking to "lift the level of sanctions against Zimbabwe," reported Reuters. The United States, United Kingdom, European Union, and the International Monetary Fund have imposed a wide range of sanctions against the Mugabe government

Military intervention

"Why not send in the troops?" asked a feature in the June 26 *Economist*. "It would be glorious if he [Mugabe] were removed by any method at all."

"A very good argument could be made for having an international force to restore peace," said South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, reported the *Daily Express*.

The same newspaper reported Britain's foreign office minister as saying, "What you cannot accept is the status quo continuing—President Mugabe has to go."

Zambian president Levy Mwanawasa, who is also chairman of the Southern Africa Development Community, called for postponing the election; Angolan president José Eduardo dos Santos urged Mugabe to "embrace a spirit of tolerance"; and South African president Thabo Mbeki met separately with Mugabe and Tsvangirai in an attempt to broker an agreement.

Tsvangirai had been arrested and severely beaten during the campaign. MDC rallies have been repeatedly banned or broken up by ZANU-PF supporters. A week before the election the wife of the MDC elected mayor of Harare was beaten to death after being abducted along with her four-year-old son. The child was freed.

The imperialists have taken advantage of such acts to campaign for sanctions and military action against Zimbabwe.

Deepening social crisis

In addition to Mugabe's second place showing in the March election, ZANU-PF lost its majority in the legislature. The results registered the widespread discontent among working people in Zimbabwe with the deepening social crisis in the country.

Unemployment is estimated at 80 percent. Inflation is a mind-staggering 100,000 percent. A single cigarette costs Z$500,000, a loaf of bread Z$1 million, and a newspaper Z$2 million. The average wage is Z$20 million a month. (On July 1 Z$10.7million was equal to US$1).

Even though the rate of HIV infection has declined, Zimbabwe's rate remains among the highest in Southern Africa at around one in every five adults. Life expectancy at birth is just over 39 years and infant mortality is 75 per 1,000 live births.

Land reform

A decades-long struggle brought an end to white-minority rule in 1978 in Zimbabwe, then called Rhodesia after the British colonialist Cecil Rhodes. Zimbabwe became independent following British-supervised elections in 1980 that were won overwhelmingly by Mugabe's ZANU.

As part of the election deal, known as the Lancaster House Agreement, the British government forced Zimbabwe to agree that there would be no seizure of land, owned mainly by white settlers, for 10 years. Britain promised funds to help purchase land of white farmers willing to sell.

In 2000 the Zimbabwean government organized the seizure of settler farms. The action was popular with the country's landless rural farmers but it was not carried out through mobilizing the toilers, but rather by rallying veterans of the independence war.

Much of the land taken went to supporters of the government and its top officials.

The MDC was formed with the backing of officials of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions in 1999 after a series of economic strikes against the government's attempt to increase taxes. Tsvangirai is a former official of ZANU-PF. He was a plant foreman at the Bindura nickel mine but later worked his way up the union hierarchy and was elected secretary-general of ZCTU in 1998.

Sokwanele.com

People in Zimbabwe line up for scarce food items outside grocery store August 2007. Workers face very high unemployment and mind-staggering inflation.

Cuban Five frame-up

Continued from page 6
the right to be safe from unreasonable searches and seizures. The Miami raid was conducted in the months before the trial against the Cuban Five opened.

The Bush administration, inaugurated in January 2001, extended its predecessors' encroachments on political rights. It seized on the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to win passage of the Patriot Act and other laws to authorize expanded police wiretapping of phones, interception of e-mail, and spying on political groups and individuals. The sentences against the Cuban Five—with terms of up to a double life sentence—were issued in December 2001, as Washington escalated its "antiterror" campaign.

Under the banner of "homeland security," the government has sought to legitimize the use of "preventive detention" with no charges, secret courts, and even torture. It is moving to try Guantánamo prisoners in military tribunals where they would be denied elementary rights.

Meanwhile, immigration cops have stepped up their raids of factories and working-class neighborhoods, increasing deportations and bringing criminal charges against foreign-born workers.

Because of the experiences by millions of workers and farmers with these assaults on their rights and conditions of life—and the growing resistance to them—the case of the Cuban Five strikes a chord among many. Working people engaged in protests against immigration raids, police frame-ups, and other class injustices are the most responsive to appeals to support the campaign to free them. By standing up, fighting, and extending their solidarity to others, these five working-class fighters have themselves been in the front ranks of the class struggle in the United States.

The next article will take up the stories of each of the five men and their years-long records of struggle on behalf of working people—in Cuba, the United States, and internationally.

Australia picket backs Cuban 5

BY ALASDAIR MACDONALD

SYDNEY, Australia–A picket of some 40 people was held outside the U.S. consulate here June 12 to demand the release of the Cuban Five—Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González. Holding banners and chanting "Free the Cuban Five!" participants passed out leaflets and encouraged passersby to find out more about the defense campaign.

The Cuban consul general for Australia, Nélida Hernández Carmona, joined more than 70 people at the official May launch of a postcard campaign calling on the U. S. government to grant Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez humanitarian visas to visit their husbands. They are married to René González and Gerardo Hernández respectively. Participants filled out many postcards to be sent to the U.S. ambassador to Australia. Further actions are planned for September.

Rebecca Pinkstone contributed to this article.

Construction worker killed in Houston

BY AMANDA ULMAN

HOUSTON—One construction worker was killed and seven injured June 19 at Rice University here. Several cinder block walls collapsed on the second floor of a dormitory under construction, killing Juan Romero, 41, and pinning four others. Three workers were injured as they tried to rescue their trapped coworkers. As of June 23, four of the injured men remained hospitalized. The workers are employed by Lucia, a subcontractor for Linbeck Group, LLC.

Severe storms swept through the area with wind gusts reported at more than 60 miles per hour shortly before the collapse. Workers were not cleared from the site in advance of the storm.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics construction work is one of the most dangerous occupations in Texas. In 2006—the most recent year for which figures exist—95 Texas construction workers died in accidents. There were 5,840 work-related fatalities in all occupations in the United States that year.

Puerto Rico and socialist revolution in the Americas

Below is a selection from Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity, *a pamphlet based on two interviews with Puerto Rican revolutionary Rafael Cancel Miranda. They were conducted by* Militant *reporters in April and July 1998. The title is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in July. Miranda is one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists who spent more than a quarter century in U.S. prisons following an armed protest they carried out in Washington against colonial rule. He was freed in 1979 through an international defense campaign.* *Copyright ©1998 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

Militant/Dan Dickeson

Rafael Cancel Miranda (with raised fist salute) and other freed Nationalist prisoners return to San Juan, Puerto Rico, after winning their release from prison in September 1979. They were welcomed at the airport by a crowd of 7,000.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

MARTÍN KOPPEL: The revolutionary government of Cuba has campaigned on behalf of the independence of Puerto Rico and the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners. What is your view of what the Cuban revolution represents?

RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA: The hope of us all. As long as Cuba is there, there is hope that we will be able to go through those doors. If Cuba falls, our struggle will take many more years. I'm not referring just to Puerto Rico but to all our peoples. So far, Cuba is the only country that U.S. financial and military interests don't control.

Cuba is also a psychological weapon for our peoples, because they instill these complexes to make us think that without the Yankees we just can't survive. The sun would stop shining. The moon would fall. . . .

Yet Cuba has survived. Not only without the Yankees. In spite of the Yankees, and in spite of all the confrontations and the U.S. blockade. Without that blockade, Cuba would not have to go through these crises. But it has weathered the crisis and has survived.

Under the system that exists in Cuba, your worth is determined by what you are. And when I talk about the system in Cuba, I'm talking about the socialist system. Your worth is measured by how you share with others. Under this system your worth is measured by what you own, and they keep us at war with each other.

For me, Cuba dignifies people, it humanizes people. This system dehumanizes people. It's dog-eat-dog. That's the philosophy. And they keep indoctrinating you in order to strip you of your human values. They keep instilling money-grubbing values so you will serve them better as a tool and to make you accept degradation and humiliation because they've taken away your values. Only people who have values are capable of feeling indignation and anger.

I was always a nationalist and defender of my country. But I'm a nationalist because I'm a socialist. And I'm a socialist because I'm a nationalist. I believe in socialism for my country because I want the best for my country and for the world.

Don Pedro [Albizu Campos] always said that first you have to have the key to the house, so you can then decide what color to paint it. He said that first we have to fight for independence and be free; then we'll be masters of our country. Then we'll be able to decide what system to have.

But as long as we're not a free country, it's the United States, the financial interests on Wall Street, the military interests in the Pentagon—which are one and the same—that will decide what kind of life we live.

Cuba was able to be socialist because it was already sovereign. It was able to dictate, within its sovereignty, the way of life it would live.

I believe in socialism as much as I believe in independence for my country. I wouldn't want a free country—with all we have sacrificed throughout our history of struggle—so that two or three parasites could take over the lives of our people, could enrich themselves at the expense of our people. I don't want that kind of independence.

Now, as long as the Soviet Union existed, for many people it was almost a cachet to be a socialist—it was almost fashionable. Because there existed a power. Later it turned out that there were a lot of socialists because of the existence of the socialist power, not because they truly believed in socialism.

Many who once could even have told you how many hairs Marx and Engels and Lenin had on their beards, today don't utter a word about socialism. Today some have thrown themselves into what they used to criticize, nationalism, which is the only door they have left to continue to struggle.

Previously, they wouldn't use the portrait of Pedro Albizu Campos, who stood for the affirmation of Puerto Rico. They would use—and I don't criticize them—the portraits of Lenin and the others. But now you don't see portraits of Lenin or Marx or Engels anywhere.

But if you believe in socialism, you believe in it even if you're alone. You don't believe in it because there are twenty thousand socialist countries or because there is one socialist country.

So, now that many who used to profess themselves socialists—because of the existence of certain powers, because they could travel to the Soviet Union—no longer do so, now I say I'm a socialist. Now they can't tell me, "He says that because the Soviet power is there." No.

I'm not saying it because there are some socialist powers somewhere. I say it because I believe in socialism, period.

July BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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EDITORIAL

For cost-of-living raises for workers

Democratic and Republican candidates all decry the relentless price increases for essential goods that are affecting millions. Republican presidential contender John McCain talks about helping "Americans hurting from high gasoline and food costs." Democrat Barack Obama asserts, "We are in this together . . . from financiers to factory workers."

Their rhetoric covers up the reality. There is no "American" crisis of fuel and food prices. There is no "we" that includes both capitalists and workers.

When the price of milk rises above $4 a gallon, it's different for a sewing-machine operator than for an auto company magnate. As medical costs shoot up, the impact on a retired coal miner and on a Wall Street broker are like night and day. Capitalists have a credit crisis—workers have a housing crisis, as rents eat up wages.

Internationally, the skyrocketing prices of staples such as rice have an even more devastating impact on workers and farmers in the semicolonial countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Capitalist politicians offer phony solutions. Obama and McCain propose tax rebates and cuts that benefit the wealthy but do nothing to ease the squeeze of rising prices and stagnant wages on working people.

They propose "American" trade policies, whether protectionism or "free trade," to get workers to identify with the owners of industry who exploit us at home, while scapegoating "foreign countries."

Inflation is inherent in the capitalist system—in the fact that production and distribution of food, energy, and other essentials is in the hands of a tiny class of billionaires who buy and sell for profit, at the expense of working people worldwide. Integral to that system is capitalist hoarding, speculation, and price rigging of grain, oil, and other commodities.

Despite what we're told by the bosses' spokespeople, wage increases don't cause inflation. Higher wages come out of the employers' profits, all of which is value produced by workers' labor. The proportion of wages and profits depends to a large degree on what workers are able to wrest from bosses in struggle.

To combat rising prices, working people need to rely on our own collective capacity to fight. The labor movement should demand cost-of-living increases in wages, Social Security, pensions, unemployment pay, and other benefits, so that when prices rise, workers' income increases accordingly.

In response to the government's rigging of the Consumer Price Index to understate the costs of food, fuel, health care, and housing, the unions should initiate committees of workers and farmers to determine the real increases that working people pay. We must also fight for an increase in the federal minimum wage to benefit the most exploited layers of the working class.

When the monopolies make excuses for their price hikes, we should assert the right to know the facts and demand: Open the books! Nationalize the energy industry, and run it under workers control, with elected committees of working people to inspect their accounts and expose their contrived shortages and price rigging!

To win these demands, working people need to break with the twin capitalist parties—the Democrats and Republicans—and organize a labor party, based on a mobilized union movement, to take our fight effectively into the political arena.

Australia protests back Aboriginal rights

BY RON POULSEN
AND MANUELE LASALO

SYDNEY, Australia—About a thousand people joined in national protests June 21 to oppose the ongoing federal government takeover of 73 Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. Some 350 people marched in Sydney while hundreds more rallied in other cities around the country, including Darwin and Alice Springs.

Protesters demanded an end to intervention in the often remote indigenous settlements. In June 2007 then-prime minister John Howard announced it would intervene in Aboriginal communities, including taking control over township leases, appointing administrators, and negating powers of the Aboriginal land councils. The new Labor government is reviewing the first year of the "emergency" measures initiated by the former conservative government.

In a report to current prime minister Kevin Rudd, the Northern Territory Emergency Response task force recommended increased policing and determining whether "outstations" are "viable" before providing services like health care or education.

Referring to one of the latest measures by Canberra, Vince Forrester, an Aboriginal leader from Mutitjulu in central Australia, told the Sydney rally, "If we don't send our kids to school, they [the federal government] will stop the welfare checks." Commenting on the abysmal neglect of services in remote areas, he noted, "They will have to provide us with school facilities first!"

He said that there is "not one Aboriginal person employed" by supermarkets in towns like Alice Springs where Aboriginal people are forced to travel to in order to shop. The government measures are pushing people out of their remote encampments toward urban centers, which amounts to "ethnic cleansing of the land," Forrester said.

Canberra's intervention follows a long campaign by capitalist politicians and the big business media to introduce private property in the name of "home ownership" in settlements on clan land. This would weaken legal recognition of native title over traditional areas won by Aboriginal land rights struggles.

Forrester noted that the "government is spending a lot of money, but it's not getting to the grassroots people, it's going to bureaucrats." Other speakers at the Sydney rally included Warren Roberts, an Aboriginal member of Young Labor, as well as representatives of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union and the Fire Brigades Employees Union. Aboriginal Rights Coalition coordinator Greg Eatok chaired.

LETTERS

Burma or Myanmar?

I would appreciate some clarification in the use of the words "Burma" vs. "Myanmar" to describe that Asian country. In the past, the *Militant* used Burma, but now seems to use "Myanmar (formerly known as Burma)." A young Burmese refugee that I have met here insists that his country's name is Burma.

Barbara Greenway
Frederick, Maryland

In reply—The British colonial rulers gave the country the name Burma in the 19th century. Independent governments from 1948 adopted the same name. In 1989 the military regime (see article in June 30 issue) changed the name of the country, and also of many cities and towns, to more accurately reflect their formal name in the Burmese language.

Myanmar is now the official name recognized by most governments and news media. Washington and London, however, refused to recognize the change and continue to call the country Burma.

Activists in the opposition to military rule in Myanmar point out that the regime had no popular mandate to change the English-language name of the country. Most, however, also say they have no principled objection to use of "Myanmar." *Militant* articles have used Myanmar when referring to current events. When describing events prior to 1989, we use Burma.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Death penalty

Continued from front page

decision. Both will have their sentences commuted to life without parole.

Capital punishment under these cases is cruel and unusual, the ruling stated. There is a distinction "between intentional first-degree murder on the one hand, and non-homicide crimes against individual persons, even including child rape, on the other."

However devastating the crime, "the death penalty is not proportional punishment for the rape of a child," wrote Judge Anthony Kennedy in the decision. Kennedy said there is a national consensus against applying the death penalty on these crimes, demonstrated by the number of states in which it is currently not being used. Forty-four states prohibit the death penalty for any kind of rape.

While declining to expand the use of the death penalty to cases in which the victim's life is not taken, the court maintained that it can continue to be used for "crimes against the state," such as treason, espionage, and "terrorism."

Both Republican and Democratic presidential candidates expressed their opposition to the decision. Republican Party candidate John McCain said it is "an assault on law enforcement's efforts to punish these heinous felons for the most despicable crime."

Democratic Party candidate Barack Obama argued that the death penalty in these cases is "at least potentially applicable," and does not violate the constitution if states apply it under "narrow, limited, well-defined circumstances."

Both senators have been consistent supporters of the death penalty.

"The death penalty is a weapon of terror the ruling class and its government uses to remind working people what is in store for us when we fight back," said Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Róger Calero.

Speaking at a campaign rally in Manhattan (see article on page 3), Calero explained how the death penalty, whether by lethal injection or the electric chair or by the cops killing workers and youth in the streets with impunity, is aimed at instilling fear.

"The Supreme Court decision to reaffirm the use of the death penalty for so-called crimes against the state is part of the preparations the capitalist rulers are making now to use this weapon against trade unionists and others resisting the attacks on our standard of living and rights," the socialist candidate added. "It should be abolished completely."

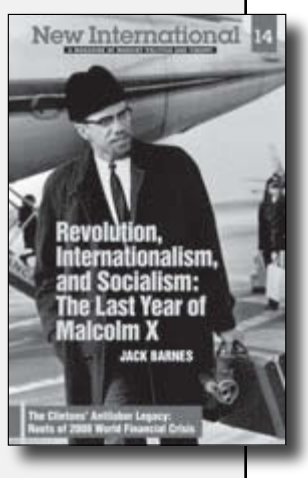
Today there are more than 3,300 inmates on death row in the United States. Of those, 42 percent are Black.

New International no. 14

• 'Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X'
—by Jack Barnes

• 'The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor'
—Statement of the Socialist Workers Party

• 'The Clintons' Anti-labor Legacy: Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis'
—by Jack Barnes



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